

gives the Governor the power to call a session for an "extraordinary occasion". There is no definition contained in the section.

The Governor has decided that the filing of referendum petitions on two acts of the last session of the legislature constitute an "extraordinary occasion" or an emergency which I am sure is his considered judgment. However, every legislative body is the sole judge of its qualifications or right to act or not to act in any given situation. Therefore, I submit it is incumbent upon us to define for ourselves whether, in fact, an emergency exists or if there is an extraordinary occasion in being in this State.

As we all know, there have in fact been filed with the Secretary of State petitions for referenda on six separate acts of the Legislature. I suppose that each of the persons or groups affected could consider that an emergency has been created by having that particular piece of legislation suspended in its operation at this time.

I am sure that the parents of children attending private or parochial schools in Baltimore County so regard the referendum petition on the law that was enacted permitting Baltimore County to transport these children to and from their schools. Questions regarding the separation of church and state may be debated on the subject, but certainly, the safety of children on the highways could be rationally argued as a situation meriting special attention.

The hard pressed businessmen and the hard pressed unemployed workers who beseech the enactment of modifications in the unemployment compensation law are certainly going to be affected directly in their pocketbooks by the suspension of the legislative act pending a vote on the next election day. I am not commenting on whether the particular law was wise or unwise but simply pointing out the effect in millions of dollars involved.

The Federal Government has certified to the State of Maryland its right to have an additional or eighth congressman, and the last session of this body created an Eighth Congressional district. One of the delegates spoke of this as being a "shotgun marriage" between little Howard County and mighty Prince George's County, and it now seems that by petition the marriage has been temporarily nullified. Some members of the House of Delegates, I understand, are or were preparing to run for Congress from this new Eighth Congressional District. Where do they run now—state wide? Or does the suspension of our last action create a situation where all of the congressmen in the state must run state-wide? I don't know, but certainly this is a rather extraordinary situation.

Each of the groups affected by the temporary suspension of the laws in which they are interested could rightly demand of the Governor that we, at this session, or at some other session, act on their behalf to circumvent the effect of the petitions filed. The right to file a referendum petition has been embedded in our Constitution for many years and is a result of a widespread national movement in this direction which resulted many years ago in similar provisions being inserted in the constitutions of many states. In fact, some states also have the right of the voters, by petition, to initiate legislation and the right of the voters, by petition, to terminate the term of a governor or member of the legislature. This, as I understand, was part of the great popular movement to insure that the republican forms of government would not escape control by the eventual democratic process of direct action by the voters.